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No: I-35-10

5 Lauder Avenue,
Toronto, Ontario.

February 8th, 1964.

Mr. L. Smith,
Chairman,
Bureau of Municipal Research.

Dear Mr. Smith:-

Having come across an article in an old newspaper saying that your committee was seeking ideas connected with municipal and school taxes, I wonder if I could send some original thoughts which I have had for some time, on that line.

One of the outstanding aspects of municipal taxes and management to-day is that the cities have got too big for the men who run them. Some aldermen don't even live among the people whom they represent, far from being personally acquainted with every one of them. Two aldermen for ward six in Toronto (which some say includes the old city of West Toronto with more added) represent more people and perhaps a bigger area than constitutes many of the cities of Ontario at the present time. Such huge responsibilities remove the representatives too far from their people and everybodies' business becomes nobody's business.

The natural unit of administration is the tribe. It was a common phenomenon that when a tribe increased in numbers until it reached about five thousand, there was a tendency for it to split, some going off under chiefs of their own to form a new tribe. Psychologists explain that, by pointing out that it is impossible for a person to know or remember more than about five thousand others.

When the numbers of the tribe had passed five thousand, it was no longer possible for the chief to remember them all and so some started being neglected so some made the move to set up a new tribe with their own chiefs.

The same thing should apply to-day to modern municipal administration. When a ward starts to exceed five thousand population, it has become too big for the alderman to give all of his people proper attention. Municipal wards should be limited to not exceeding five thousand population. A ward with under two thousand people could have one alderman, a ward with two thousand or more but under four thousand, two aldermen and a ward with over four thousand but under five thousand three aldermen. The aldermen should have to live among their people and be free among them, and one of them and a friend of each one.

The position of an alderman should be an honour in which he would be proud to serve, not a paid job at which someone could make a career. And the alderman should have to know every member of his bailliwick well enough to call him correctly by both his first and last names. He should know something of each one's social, business and personal background including his ability or inability to pay and the limits to which his ability might extend. Elections should be annual and under no circumstances should the alderman be allowed to push one of his constituant's ability to pay to the last cent. There should be some change in the Municipal Act to prevent that.

As it is now, in such widespread jurisdictions as some big city wards, the alderman not only don't know who their constituants are but the constituants don't know who their alderman is. Even those who vote, don't know who they are voting for and many mark an "X" after a name chosen from a group, not one of which the voter ever heard of before he looked at his ballot and of the person behind which name, he knows nothing. The cities have become too big for association between the voters and the members of council.

The ward should become the unit of government, the alderman acting without pay for his neighbours, making his assessments sheltering the poorer householders in doing so, setting the tax rate for his ward, sending out the bills and collecting the taxes personally. He would also be responsible for the disbursement of the money for his ward. A council meeting would be held in the local school building at any time a quorum of twenty-five of his constitutants was present for the alderman to address.

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People seldom commit crimes among their friends and associates, so crime would disappear in such close-knit smaller communities. The alderman, as part of his duties could act as a county constable and should anybody get out of hand, he would pin on his badge, put on his hat, take his billy and handcuffs and make the arrest. Provision for a lock-up would be made in the school building.

Each self-contained municipality-like ward could have one paid employee, to collect the garbage, look after the street lights, act as an assistant constable, fix the sidewalks and take care of the school.

At the present time he would be paid about three thousand dollars a year, which coming from almost a thousand properties being taxed, would keep the total municipal property taxes well under ten dollars a year each. If larger repair jobs to the school building or the sidewalks were needed, the alderman could fall back on statute labour to get it done. Persons unable to do their share would be excused and those able but unwilling could always send in a hired substitute.

Householders would have to sort their garbage into five cans and have each can collected on a different day, one for metal, one for glass, one for rags and rope, one for paper and one for rotten kitchen food, all of which could be sold, the last to a pig farm. Anything else, like an old piano, television or furniture, the owner would have to arrange to be taken away by someone else.

Water would be bought from the water company, and sewage would be turned over to the Province, its responsibility. Public transportations should be of two kinds, one running on rubber would be in the hands of private enterprise where it belongs, anyone having the money to buy a bus could put it on the road and charge his fares what he thought it was worth. The other which calls for a big investment for steel rails and heavy electric cars to run on them should be put in the hands of the Provincial Hydro, to carry out the Sir Adam Beck vision of an interlocking, intercity street car system transporting passengers and freight.

This proposal pretty well gets rid of the city halls and their employees, the expensive policing, fire protection would be better as it would be volunteer with one station for every thousand houses; subsidized water is got rid of and put back into private enterprise, in fact the cities as we know them would cease to exist and become mere geographical areas with no mayors and no councils.

As for schools they are a more difficult problem but some incentive might be given to people to send their young ones to private schools.

The reason I have had some thoughts along these lines is that at last, the demands on me for taxes from all angles has exceeded my total annual income. Maybe I can send you my tax bill. You can keep it as I am not going to pay it. When I found that it was impossible to pay all of them, I gave up trying to pay any of them. The taxes on this place used to be about one hundred and sixty dollars a year. There is nothing I get for paying this but 2 receipts.

Yours truly,

John McIntosh.

6-7-619694

City of Toronto

Finance Department

City Hall Toronto 1, Ontario

Enforcement Branch

January 16 1964

John McIntosh
5 Lauder Ave 10

5 Lauder Ave
35 x 110

Dear Sir or Madam:

The Tax Office records indicate that the undernoted taxes and late payment charges are owing.

1963	Realty Taxes	$565.29
	Penalty and Interest	21.40
	Total Amount Due	$586.69

Late payment charges increase with each passing month. It is, therefore, most important that payment be made forthwith. If this is not possible we shall be pleased to work out satisfactory payment arrangements with you. Unless this is done, collection proceedings involving additional cost to you will have to be instituted.

Please give this matter your immediate attention either by payment or by getting in touch with the Supervisor.

Yours truly,

(G. J.?) Hughes

Tel. 367 7104

Tax Collector

Refer to:

V. Cranfield
Supervisor.

City of Toronto

Finance Department

City Hall Toronto 1, Ontario

January 16, 1954.

Mr. Welcome Mr Ice

Roll No. 1954
Folio No. 10

Ward No. 5
Assessment $ 110

Date Bill Mailed:

The Tax Notice records indicate that the undermentioned taxes and local improvement charges are owing.

1953 Realty Taxes	$585.40
Penalty and Interest	23.40
Total Amount Due	$608.80

Late payment charges increase each month pending penalty. If this is, therefore, most important that payment be made forthwith. If this is not possible we will be pleased to have out solicitor attempt arrangements with you. Unless this is done, collection proceedings involving additional cost to you will have to be instituted.

Please give this matter your immediate attention, either by payment or by getting in touch with the Supervisor.

Yours truly,

(C. J.T) Hughes

Tel. 367 7121. Tax Collector

Refer to:

K. Greenfield
Supervisor.